

## Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 NEA-10 ISO-00 IO-11 DHA-02 CIAE-00 DODE-00

PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01

SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 EURE-00 EB-07 OMB-01 /090 W

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P R 231616Z JAN 76

FM AMEMBASSY LONDON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 8381

INFO AMEMBASSY BEIRUT PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

USMISSION EC BRUSSELS

C O N F I D E N T I A L L O N D O N 0 1 1 5 7

E.O. 11652: XGDS-1

TAGS: PFOR, UK, LE

SUBJECT: BRITISH POLICY ON LEBANON

1. BEGIN UNCLASSIFIED. DURING QUESTIONING BY CONSERVATIVE OPPOSITIMN IN HOUSE OF COMMONS JANUARY 21, FCO SPOKESMAN (MINISTER OF STATE HATTERSLEY) STATED UK POLICY ON LEBANON AS FOLLOWS (EXCERPTS):

A) IN REPLY TO QUESTION BY AMERY AS TO WHAT STEPS FCO HAS TAKEN TO PROTECT BRITISH LIVES, HATTERSLEY REPLIED, "OUR AMBASSADOR IN BEIRUT HAS OVER THE PAST WEEKS REPEATEDLY WARNED MEMBERS OF THE BRITISH COMMUNITY IN LEBANON THAT THEY SHOULD SERIOUSLY CONSIDER LEAVING UNLESS THERE IS SOME OVERRIDING REASON WHY THEY SHOULD STAY. WE SHALL CONTINUE TO WATCH THE SITUATION EXTREMELY CLOSELY AND TAKE WHATEVER STEPS ARE REQUIRED TO EVACUATE THE REMAINING MEMBERS OF THE BRITISH COMMUNITY SHOULD IT PROVE NECESSARY...ABOUT 1,000 BRITISH SUBJECTS ARE LEFT IN THE

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LEBANON. THAT IS ABOUT ONE-THIRD OF THE TOTAL

NUMBER THERE WHEN MY RIGHT HON. FRIEND THE FOREIGN SECRETARY FIRST SUGGESTED THAT THEY SHOULD COME HOME IF THERE WERE NO PRESSING NEED FOR THEM NOT TO DO SO. EVEN IF THE AIRPORT REMAINS CLOSED AND THERE ARE DIFFICULTIES IN TRAVELING OVERLAND, THERE IS A CONTINGENCY PLAN TO GET THE BRITISH CITIZENS OUT IN TIME AND, I HOPE, IN SAFETY."

B) IN REPLY TO QUESTIONING ABOUT PLA "INVASION FROM SYRIA" AND PROPOSAL THAT UK DISCUSS WITH EC PARTNERS THE DANGER OF BREAK-UP OF LEBANON, HATTERSLEY STATED, "DISCUSSIONS ARE GOING AT THIS MOMENT...AND I DO NOT WANT TO SAY ANYTHING TO PREJUDICE THE CHANCES OF THOSE DISCUSSIONS...WE HAVE MADE ABSOLUTELY CLEAR AND PUBLIC, AND MY RIGHT HON. FRIEND THE PRIME MINISTER PUT IT IN HIS CHRISTMAS MESSAGE TO THE LEBANESE PRIME MINISTER, THAT OUR COMMITMENT TO THE CONTINUED TERRITORIAL INTEERITY AND INDEPENDENCE OF THE LEBANON IS ABSOLUTE. THAT REMAINS OUR ESTABLISHED POLICY, A POLICY WE HAVE TRIED TO DEVELOP THROUGH CONSULTATIONS WITHIN THE COMMUNITY, WITH THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA, AND WITH THE GOVERNMENTS OF OTHER COUNTRIES WHOM WE FELT WE COULD HELP IN THESE MATTERS."

END UNCLASSIFIED.

2. BEGIN CONFIDENTIAL. COMMENT: THE OPPOSITION QUESTIONS WERE RAISED AGAINST THE BACKGROUND OF A CURRENT SPATE OF ANALYTICAL ARTICLES ON THE LEBANESE SITUATION IN THE MORE INFLUENTIAL LONDON PAPERS, INCLUDING STORIES IN THE FINANCIAL TIMES SHOWING MAPS DELIMITING THE AREA OF LEBANON IN WHICH "DE FACTO PARTITION ALREADY EXISTS" (JUST NORTH OF THE BEIRUT-ZAHLE ROAD TO ZGHORTA AND BESHARRI). A TORY MP TOLD EMBOFFS THAT AMERY'S QUESTION WAS PROMPTED BY A MESSAGE TO HIM FROM CHAMOUN. WHILE THE TIMES OF JANUARY 23 CARRIES A STORY FROM MARTIN IN BEIRUT THAT THERE ARE "PLANS TO REMOVE THE REMAINING BRITONS FROM THE COUNTRY" WHEN THE AIRPORT IS REOPENED, THE FCO

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DESK OFFICER FOR LEBANON STATES THAT THE MAIN WITHDRAWAL OPERATION HE KNOWS OF CURRENTLY BEING CONDUCTED BY THE BRITISH IS THE FURTHER WITHDRAWAL OF NON-ESSENTIAL OFFICIAL PERSONNEL. FURTHER REMOVAL OF BRITONS WILL DEPEND ON THE STATE OF THE CEASE-FIRE AND THE STATE OF THE AIRPORT. THE FCM NEAR EAST DEPARTMENT CONTINUES TO KEEP CLOSELY POSTED ON WHEREABOUTS OF BRITISH NAVAL VESSELS IN THE MEDITERRANEAN. WE UNDERSTAND THERE ARE NONE AT PRES-

ENT IN THE EASTERN MEDITERRANEAN. END CONFIDENTIAL.

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